

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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LAWMAKERS CALL FOR GAO INVESTIGATION OF MISHANDLING OF IRAQI INTELLIGENCE

Experts Overridden by Senior DOE Officials Regarding Weapons Capability of Aluminum Tubes.

Washington, D.C. -- Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) today released a letter signed by himself and four other Democratic lawmakers asking the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to undertake an investigation into the apparent misuse or mishandling of intelligence about Iraqi nuclear programs at the Department of Energy.

“Recent reports in the press show that Energy Department nuclear intelligence experts strongly disagreed with the CIA’s theory that aluminum tubes acquired by Iraq were intended for use in enriching uranium,” said Rep. Markey, a senior Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Homeland Security Committee.

Rep. Markey explained, “We want to know why the Energy Department overrode the views of its top nuclear experts and agreed to an intelligence estimate stating that Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear weapons program.”

In addition to Rep. Markey, the lawmaker’s letter was signed by Representatives John D. Dingell (D-MI), Henry Waxman (D-CA), Bart Stupak (D-MI), and Diana DeGette (D-CO). It notes that media reports have stated that the Energy Department official who overrode the recommendations of the Department’s intelligence experts had only been in his position for five months, did not appear to have experience in the intelligence community, and received substantial financial bonuses in the months leading up to the Iraq war. The lawmakers have asked the GAO to investigate the role that senior Energy Department officials played in crafting the intelligence estimates about Iraq in the months leading up to the war, and how the conclusions of DOE’s nuclear intelligence experts were communicated to senior officials in the White House and other Administration agencies.

Rep. Markey concluded, “We now know that Energy Department nuclear intelligence analysis had determined two years ago that the aluminum tubes Iraq had acquired were intended for a conventional rocket program, not for a uranium centrifuge. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration continued to maintain that these tubes were evidence of a reconstituted nuclear weapons program. We need to know exactly how and why this occurred and who was responsible.”

Copies of the lawmakers’ letter can be found at www.house.gov/markey.